

O 171605Z JAN 08
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4281
INFO AMEMBASSY KAMPALA PRIORITY
CDC ATLANTA GA PRIORITY 4227

UNCLAS NAIROBI 000197

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ASEC](#) [CASC](#) [KE](#) [PGOV](#)
SUBJECT: KENYA: JANUARY 17, 2008

REF: A. NAIROBI 190

1B. 184 AND PREVIOUS

11. AS OF 01/17 1800 HOURS (NAIROBI TIME):

SECURITY SITUATION: AROUND 1400 HOURS, SEVERAL ODM LEADERS ATTEMPTED TO LEAD A GROUP OF PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATORS INTO UHURU PARK AND WERE STOPPED BY POLICE, WITH TEAR GAS. THE DEMONSTRATORS RETREATED. LARGE BUT PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATIONS IN ELDORET; MOMBASA QUIET; POCKETS OF CONFRONTATION IN NAIROBI AND KISUMU, LARGELY BETWEEN POLICE AND GANGS OF YOUTH IN THE KIBERA AND MATHARE AREAS OF NAIROBI AND THE SUBURBS OF KISUMU, CHARACTERIZED BY GROUPS OF YOUNG MEN BURNING TIRES AND ERECTING ROADBLOCKS, AND CHALLENGING POLICE. ONE PERSON REPORTED KILLED IN SUCH A CONFRONTATION WITH THE POLICE IN KISUMU. TWO PEOPLE WERE REPORTED KILLED BY A MOB IN NAIROBI, BEFORE POLICE COULD INTERVENE.

IT IS DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH IF THE PROTAGONISTS ARE DEMONSTRATORS OR OPPORTUNISTIC CRIMINAL "GANGS." KIBERA AND MATHARE ARE AREAS WHERE CRIMINAL GANGS, INCLUDING THE INFAMOUS MUNGIKI, ARE ACTIVE; KIBERA HAS BEEN A BATTLE GROUND IN THE PAST BETWEEN RESIDENTS/GANGS OF DIFFERENT ETHNIC GROUPS AND BETWEEN RESIDENTS AND POLICE. WHILE NOT MINIMIZING THE EXTENT OF VIOLENCE IN PARTS OF NAIROBI, IT SHOULD BE RECALLED THAT FOR MANY YEARS NAIROBI HAS BEEN PLAGUED BY VIOLENT CRIME AND IS RATED "CRITICAL" THREAT FOR CRIME AND TERRORISM.

THE AMBASSADOR TODAY SENT LETTERS TO THE MINISTERS FOR INTERNAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS EXPRESSING OUR "GRAVE CONCERNS WITH THE USE OF UNJUSTIFIED DEADLY FORCE IN RESPONSE TO DEMONSTRATIONS," SPECIFICALLY CITING THE VIDEO AIRED BY KTN TELEVISION ON THE EVENING OF JANUARY 16 THAT SHOWS SECURITY FORCES USING DEADLY FORCE AGAINST TWO UNARMED, NON-THREATENING DEMONSTRATORS IN KISUMU. (SEPTEL)

MISSION PERSONNEL: EMBASSY -- AND CDC AND MRU OFFICES -- IN NAIROBI AND KISUMU WERE OPEN FOR BUSINESS TODAY AND WILL BE TOMORROW. ALL OFFICIAL AMERICANS AND FSN/LES EMPLOYEES ARE ACCOUNTED FOR; AGENCY AND SECTION HEADS HAVE BEEN REMINDED TO NOTIFY AND MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH TDY VISITORS. INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF KENYA WAS OPEN TODAY AND WILL BE TOMORROW. ROSSLYN ACADEMY WILL BE ON HALF-DAY SCHEDULE THROUGH THE END OF THE WEEK.

AMCITS: NO REPORTS OF CASUALTIES TO DATE. AMBASSADOR HAS SCHEDULED A TOWN HALL MEETING WITH NON-OFFICIAL AMERICANS FOR FRIDAY, JANUARY 18.

POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: FORMER SG KOFI ANNAN, WHO POSTPONED HIS ARRIVAL FOR HEALTH REASONS, IS EXPECTED TO ARRIVE IN NAIROBI TOMORROW, JANUARY 18. THE TWO MEMBERS OF THE AFRICAN EMINENT PERSONS MISSION, GRACA MACHEL AND BENJAMIN MKAPA, ARRIVED TODAY.
RANNEBERGER